

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the First full paragraph of specification page 12 with the following replacement paragraph:

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It should be noted that all write operations in the file system are performed to “free space” blocks on disks. A free space block represents an available location (e.g., data block) on disk that is not currently used to store valid information. When storing a file to disk, the write allocator 310 of the WAFL layer 280 writes into these free blocks at a write allocation point. The write allocator generally writes only a certain number of blocks to a given disk prior to moving to a next disk, so as to spread the data across multiple disks. Notably, the write allocator 310 writes the file data in generally the same area of the disk during a CP operation. The function of the scanner, helper/cleaner, write allocation and related processes are described in further detail in commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application Serial No. ~~{Atty. Docket No. 112056-0002}~~ 10/027,634 now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,978,283, entitled FILE SYSTEM DEFRAGMENTATION TECHNIQUE VIA WRITE ALLOCATION by John Edwards, et al, ~~the teachings of which are expressly incorporated herein by reference~~. Note that certain of these processes can be changed or omitted without affecting the system and method of the present invention.

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Please replace the Second paragraph of specification page 15 with the following replacement paragraph:

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According to decision step 610, the procedure checks the current state to determine whether the LOAD phase of a requested transaction can be performed right away. This involves a query of the file handle associated with the requested transaction to determine whether the file may be acted upon or is created. As described above, certain operations on a file (such as a write) cannot be performed before prior prerequisite transactions (such as a create) have occurred. If the requested transaction can be accomplished presently, the procedure completes the LOAD phase (step 612) with respect to that message and associated file, and the initiator then changes the respective transaction block state from NEW to “LOADED” (step 614).

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